7/13/70

Paul (Mary, Gary),

Whether or not I ever told you, OSWALD IN NEW ORLEANS was a financial disster from which I never got a cent, having been conned into a 50% deal so fabricated that there was no possibility of any return to me. In fact, despite repeated requests and promises, to this day I have never received an accounting, no doubt because the house that published is so liberal and principled.

I understand 50,000 copies only were printed. In Calif. the wholesalers may have been typical, holding the book for the Garrison trial. Elsewhere, whever it was put on sale, even with no advertising, it cleaned out fast. So, it was soon necessary to recall extras, and this was done, for the warehouse was without copies. Then there were some returns, for there was no advertising at all-not even an announcement to the trade press!

John Christian got 5,000 copies, for which he was never accounted, from which he never forwarded a cent, and which re refused to return to me. He told me he had them warehoused and would give them back to me if I paid shipment costs (not the practise and not possible). Ultimately, Conyon agreed to pay these costs, but I presume John could not then be found. I asked Hal to try and do something, but apparently he couldn't.

If these exist, they are the only remaining copies, and I'd sure like to find some way of getting them. I also asked Hal to try and get a lawyer to do something, but on this I've had no response. Grove, which took over distribution says (probably truthfully) that the book is out of print and is returning orders.

I have been selling the copies I have, very few in all, at the regular price plus a handling charge that doesn't cover the actual cost of mailing. The few remaining copies I'll have to nurse and cannot sell for anything like that. I'll have to charge at least the cost of xeroxing, which still yields no return for all that work.

When Lil and I discussed this, on getting a letter from one who had written Grove, she said she'd like to retype the entire thing, putting back in what was cut out, including the index, and correcting the errors. This might be desireable but it is not feasible, for there are other things she must do. So, I raise the question of sacrificing two copies, pasting them up (four pages to a legal-sized page (the actual type takes up about 3⅛x6½"), and adding the index. I think the few copies that could then be sold could be sold at twice the xeroxing cost, thus yielding a slight return, at least enough to cover the time and trouble of wrapping, mailing and record-keeping, not a profit in any real sense.

Does anyone have any suggestions or opinions, or a candidate to do the pasting up, or someone who might be willing to advance the cost of doing the job? Do you think I should forget about it? I hate for it not to be available, but we can afford nothing, not now having even the funds required by pressing obligations. Also, if this were done, I could pick up some of the typos, of which I have a record, which is probably most of them.

As you will realize, this is but another evidence of the profitability of "scavenging"....And Scotch "magic" tape, burnished, or rubber cement, would be better than paste...Please understand I am not trying to place any of you under any kind of obligation or load, particularly not Paul, who has been too burdened by the copying, anyway. However, in anticipation of such an eventuality, I'll see if Lil, who has legible handwriting, can correct two copies of the book. Sincerely,